

Disease X, Nashville's next epidemic?

Our next health crisis could be caused by something no doctor has ever heard of, and that we have no remedy for.



"The disease spread, with frightful mortality, the rich and poor, the white and black,... The death list one day was over 100."
- The New York Times, 1875

Nashville City

Cemetery History Series

Disease X: the risk of an unknown virus or other pathogen.

Cholera

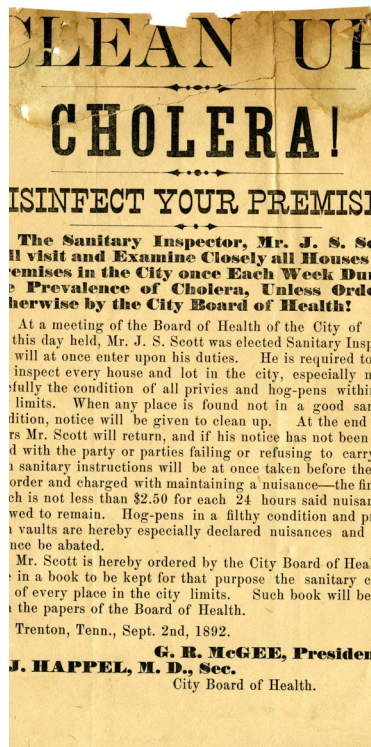
During the nineteenth century, "King Cholera" was deadly. Tennessee suffered crippling cholera epidemics during the nineteenth century, most notably in 1849, 1866, and 1873.

When it first reached Nashville, cholera was believed to spread through poisonous airs or 'miasmas'. Later in 1854 it was found to be transmitted through unsanitary water contaminated with cholera bacteria, usually from human waste. A disease of the intestines, cholera produces symptoms that include



New York Times of July 11, 1873, reported there was "Filth enough in Nashville and Memphis to give the scourge a strong foothold."

Disinfectant notices



Health, looking to the comfort and health of the city, and recognizing the importance of prompt advice of these gentlemen, who have the well at heart, you are **Hereby Requested** to use continuously one of the disinfectants named below:

1st. 2 Lbs. Chloride Lime dissolved in 8 Gallons of Water.
2d. One ounce each Corrosive Sublimated Sulphur and Manganate of Potash in 4 Gallons of Water.

OR EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

2 Lbs. Chloride Lime, 2 Lbs. Copperas, 2 Lbs. Carbolic Acid, 1 Peck of Lime.

The ordinances of the City make it a penalty of \$25.00. You are urged to make of your premises at least once a week the disinfectants named above.

TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN NASHVILLE, TENN.

The cholera, which has been raging for several weeks, raging to an alarming extent throughout Europe, has at last crossed the Atlantic and is now on the coast of America. It is all probability, within the next 24 hours, will penetrate far into the interior of our country, and therefore becomes our duty to at once prevent the grim destroyer of human life from entering our town.

You are hereby given official notice to clean out and thoroughly disinfect all privies, premises, using freshly boiling water together with lime, sulphur, carbolic acid or 1 part chloride of lime to 10 parts of water. Destroy all foul odors, and all piles of garbage or decaying vegetable and to keep thoroughly clean the street in front of your residence or place of business, keeping premises at all times free from any and every thing that causes foul odors which aid in the development and spread of infectious or contagious diseases.

The proper sanitary officer will visit you five days from the date of this notice and have in any way failed to comply with the terms of the same he will immediately have cleaning up as is necessary done and the cost same will be charged to you, and collected.



profuse watery diarrhea, vomiting, excessive thirst, high fever and unbearable pain in the limbs. It is still a major problem in undeveloped countries.

Sulphur fumigation was used to disinfect and to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as cholera, yellow fever, and tuberculosis.

In an 1892 resolution, the Knoxville Board of Public Works provides two formulas for cholera disinfectants. This handbill encourages citizens to examine their properties weekly and apply a solution as needed. A \$25.00 fine is ordered for offenders who violate city sanitary laws.

Cholera can now be treated successfully through oral rehydration therapy and antibiotics.

CHOLERA BURIALS NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY

